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COMIC SHOP NEWS™

American Vampire

"A compelling (and very funny) examination of the creepy duality of modern existence by a comic book (sorry, graphic novel) master at the height of his powers." — Dan Clowes, *Ghost World*

PETER BAGGE'S

OTHER LIVES

An Original Graphic Novel

Written & Illustrated by PETER BAGGE

APRIL 2010

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American Born & Bled

There's a new breed of vampire on the comic shop shelves this week—and this new breed has quite the literary pedigree!

American Vampire #1, the debut issue of a new ongoing series, is the creation of *Scott Snyder*—but he's not the writing this series solo. Instead, he's joined by one of the most legendary authors in contemporary horror: *Stephen King*, a man whose name virtually epitomizes horror fiction in the minds of millions of readers and viewers.

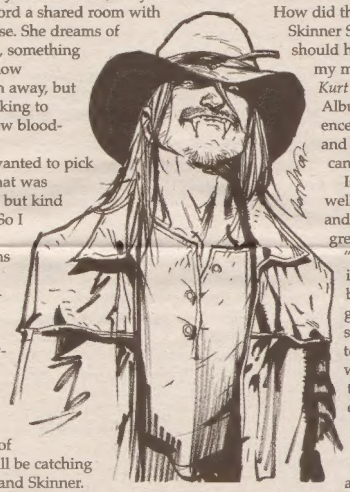
American Vampire focuses on a breed of vampires far removed from the moody, hair-products-dependent vampires so common in film and television. Snyder explained how the concept came about. "The idea came to me a few years ago, actually. It was during another earlier wave of vampire stuff—***Blade*** and ***Underworld***—and my friends and I were joking around about how all these vampires wore leather and long coats and had accents and seemed to be cut from the same cloth, and that got me thinking, why not a new kind of vampire? And if a new vampire, why not make something home-grown, something born *here*, a creature of the American landscape, sun and desert and frontier… The central concept, of vampire evolution, grew out of that. As for why a comic, the series is all about tracking this new bloodline through the decades, so the notion of doing different cycles about different decades really seemed to fit perfectly."

"We've designed a pretty extensive genealogical tree for ourselves, with all kinds of variety. All have some sort of fangs, all of them drink blood. Other than that, they're all different, with different weaknesses and strengths. Some have other materials they react to the way the dominant species of vampires react to wood—materials that cause violent immediate infection in them. Revealing different species and exploring the secret history of vampire evolution will be a big part of the fun."

One of the central figures in ***American Vampire*** is Skinner, a vampire in the 19th Century American West. Snyder explained what he hoped to accomplish with Skinner when he initially developed the character "I actually don't think vampires in the Old West are that interesting in and of themselves— at least, not the old familiar, charming, stylish, nocturnal, Old World, anemic-looking, stake-through-the-heart type of vampires. Setting those vampires in the Old West feels sort of like a bad mash-up to me. On the other hand, a new kind of vampire being born in the West, a new species with distinctly American characteristics, a creature of the sun and desert with rattle-snake fangs... that's much more interesting. If we're really going to do a series about a new American vampire bloodline, for me, the first of that bloodline really has to be born in the iconic Old West. (I'm a huge Western fan, too!)"

AMERICAN VAMPIRE

The other story arc in the early issue will focus on Pearl; who is she, and what's her relation to Skinner Sweet? "Pearl is a struggling young actress in Hollywood of 1925," Snyder said. "She works three jobs to afford a shared room with a friend at a ladies' boarding house. She dreams of being a part of something special, something lasting. As for how she gets to know Skinner—I don't to give too much away, but I *will* say that he takes a certain liking to her, and she becomes part of a new bloodline that begins with Skinner..."



Why the Jazz Age setting? "I wanted to pick up with the bloodline in an era that was very different from the Old West, but kind of equally iconic," Snyder said. "So I figured the 20's, with the old Hollywood glamour, the mansions and speakeasies, would be a fun time to explore. And there's plenty of vampirism to go around, between the studio system, prohibition, robber barons and everything."

Are Pearl and Skinner immortal--and if so, will we see them in other eras as well?

"Absolutely," Snyder said. "One of the fun things about the series will be catching up with big characters like Pearl and Skinner. At the same time, we want to introduce a fresh cast each cycle, too."

Does ***American Vampire*** follow an ensemble cast, or will it focus on different characters in different arcs? "We're going to pick up with a different decade, explore different moments of American history. So we intend to have each cycle be standalone, and to introduce somewhat of a cast in each one—but the series also follows the American bloodline, so I can promise you that Pearl and Skinner and other heavies will be a big part of many of the upcoming cycles."

American Vampire is illustrated by *Rafael Albuquerque*, who explained how he became a part of the creative team. "Last NYCC, I was looking for *Will Dennis*, an editor I admire very much, because I was looking for something out of the superhero genre," Albuquerque said. "About four or five months later, Mark, his assistant, contacted me talking about this super-secret project that was in the works; they wanted me to get involved. I had just started ***Superman/Batman*** at that time and said, 'Cool, but can I at least know who is writing before I say yes?' They said 'not yet!' Months later, when they put the cards on the table, I finally realized why!"

When Albuquerque signed on to ***American Vampire,*** Scott had a vision in his head, but I was totally involved in concept creation, and even discussed aspects of the story and all. It is a really interesting contribution of everyone in the team."

Albuquerque describes ***American Vampire*** as less a splatterpunk gore-heavy vampire tale and "more a moody kind of story—but sometimes, when important, we show what's necessary. The thing is do not show anything without reason, however show everything it is important, no matter how shocking it is. Thats the good thing about working for a more mature audience—we can do anything we want!"

How did the artist develop the distinctive looks of Skinner Sweet and Pearl? "For Skinner, Scott said he should have the attitude of a rockstar, so those were my main influences. I've researched photos of *Kurt Cobain, Johnny Deep, Kid Rock*," Albuquerque said. "Scott gave me a lot of references of what he had in mind for both Skinner and Pearl, as well as the other characters, so we can say it was pretty much a team work."

Is it artistically challenging to illustrate such well-known historical milieus as the Old West and the American Jazz Age? Does it require a great deal of research for authenticity?

"Totally," Albuquerque said. "When I was invited to do it, Mark said I was chosen because I can play with different styles—going from something more traditional to something rougher and grittier. I really like to play with the way I ink, and also to play with different storytelling influences, so I tried to create a very different look for both eras presented in this first arc."

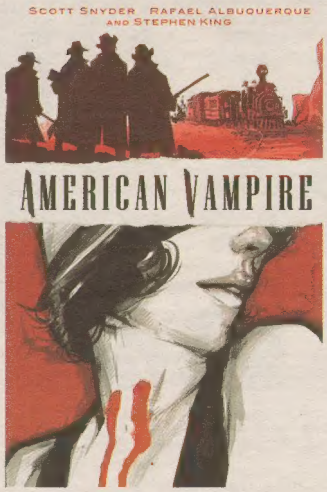
Snyder explained how he became involved in comics—and how that involvement led to ***American Vampire*** and a collaboration with *Stephen King*. "In 2008, a buddy of mine organized an anthology of stories by contemporary writers that had them make up new superheroes—a book of origin stories called 'Who Can Save Us Now?' I wrote a story called 'The Thirteenth Egg,' about a young man caught in the Bikini Atoll tests in the 40's, who returns home with strange side-effects. The story got picked up for a magazine as well—***The Virginia Quarterly***—and caught the attention of a couple comic editors. Two of them actually came to the launch for the anthology and pretty much just approached me afterward and asked if I was actually a comic fan or not. I told them I was (I actually had some issues in my bag that night) and one, an editor at Marvel, asked me if I'd like to pitch a one-shot for the 75th Anniversary series Marvel was doing just then. So I pitched a story about the original Torch, it went through, and I became a comic

Courtesy your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!

writer. Seeing that issue come out was one of the best days of my life!

"That led to the opportunity to pitch to my current editor at Vertigo, who's just incredible—a guy named *Mark Doyle*. I went in for lunch, pitched ***American Vampire***, which I'd been considering doing as a series of stories or even a book, and Mark got excited. He helped me retool my pitch a lot for *Will Dennis* and *Karen Berger*, and happily, they all were very enthusiastic. The series got bought right about a year ago, in February of 2009.

"I was really nervous—I grew up on a steady diet of Vertigo books: ***Swamp Thing, Preacher, Sandman***... Then ***Y, Fables, 100 Bullets, DMZ, Air***... And now ***Scalped, Unwritten, Sweet Tooth, Northlanders***... I feel like I was plucked out of little league and dropped in the majors. But everyone at Vertigo has been so supportive, from *Karen Berger* and *Will Dennis* right on down. They've helped me make the series as good as possible every step of the way. And believe



me, I'm trying my hardest - no one's more aware of the high bar that comes with Vertigo than I am!"

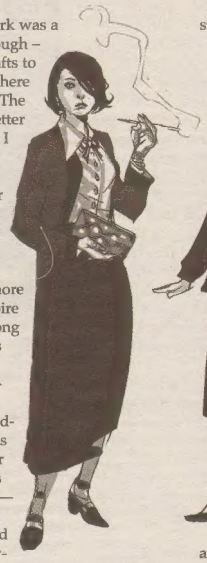
How did Stephen King become involved with ***American Vampire?*** "Steve got involved because I'd sent him the pitch to see if he'd be up for giving a quote or doing an intro for the trade at some point—really just seeing if he'd be up for writing a line or two. I'd been lucky enough to get my book of stories, ***Voodoo Heart***, to him through a close mutual connection, and he'd been kind enough to blurb the collection—and we'd kept in touch since.

"Anyway, he wrote back saying he liked the character of Skinner enough that he'd actually be up for writing an issue or two. Getting that email was one of the best days ever. I mean, getting to work with one of your literary idols... As for him returning, nothing would make us happier. We've only just finished editing this cycle though, so nothing's planned yet."

""I love vampire stories, and the idea of following the dark exploits of a uniquely American vampire really lit up my imagination," King said. "The chance to do the origin story—to be 'present at the creation' —was a thrill. I owe big thanks to *Scott Snyder* for letting me share his vision, and sip from his bucket of blood."

Are Snyder and King collaborating on each issue, or will each writer produce separate stories? "We discussed the stories at length before we started, then each of us did story outlines, traded, did page-breakdowns, traded, then scripted separately, traded… We wanted the stories to be stand-alone, but to have few points of crossover," Snyder said..

"Watching Steve work was a huge inspiration though – it took me many drafts to get my scripts anywhere near his first drafts. The series is infinitely better for his involvement. I couldn't be more grateful."



King's no stranger to vampires, having dealt with the almost archetypal vampiric figure in ***Salem's Lot*** and a more contemporary vampire in "Night Flier," among other works. Did his contribution to the series bring new elements to ***American Vampire*** that you hadn't considered? "He's working off a master plan—the characters were all in the pitch—but he's added a ton of his own twists and turns and terrific layers to the thing. What happened was that initially, he signed up to do a couple issues, so what we figured we'd do was split those issues into small chapters that we could tease at the ends of my story each issue. Like 16/6 each issue—16 me, 6 him—with his story telling a little about the origin of Skinner, who would appear only briefly in my story.

"So he started with an outline I gave him, but a couple weeks in, he wrote me this email asking if he might be able to 'go off the rez a little.' I told him to do anything he wanted, thinking he'd add a few pages here or there, but he ended up writing 5 full issues—16 pages each!—and taking the characters to darker, better places than I'd even have been able to. It was incredibly inspiring watching him work. He was very eager for editorial advice, as this is his first time scripting, but he picked up the form in no time. He did redrafts, edits... The guy went to the mat. Not that he really had to - his first pass was better than my fifth; the guy is a genius. And honestly, the series is exponentially better for his involvement. I'm very excited for people to see him shine on this."

Is King the only guest writer Snyder invite to join you on ***American Vampire***, or will others contribute to upcoming issues? "I can think of a bunch of writers I'd *love* to invite—though no one could top Steve—but I think we'll steer it ourselves for at least a couple cycles."

As it turns out, King isn't the only superstar joining Snyder and Albuquerque on ***American Vampire.*** Acclaimed illustrator *Jim Lee* will supply the 1-for-25 variant cover for the first issue, marking a rare foray into horror for the artist best known for his stunning superhero work. (Lee's variant cover work for ***American Vampire #1*** can be seen on the front cover of this issue of ***Comic Shop News.***)

Is ***American Vampire*** an open-ended ongoing series, or is it a long-form finite series along the lines of ***Lucifer, Sandman***, and ***Y—The Last Man***? "Well I do have an ending in mind," Snyder said, "but that said, we're already planning cycles that span a ton of different decades. So hopefully, that end won't come for a long, long time!"

American Vampire #1, a $3.99 comic, is scheduled for March 17th release—which means that it should be on the comic shop racks right now!

by Cliff Biggers

SPIDER-MAN

BY STAN LEE & LARRY LIEBER

THESE PHOTOS ARE TERRIFIC, MAN! WHO ARE YOU?
NAME'S PETER PARKER. I'M A PART-TIME PHOTOG FOR NEW YORK'S DAILY BUGLE.
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 3-11

ISN'T THAT "SKINFLINT" JAMESON'S RAG?
APPARENTLY HIS REPUTATION PRECEDES HIM.
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COMIC SHOP NEWSARAMA

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Stan Lee Makes His... Archie?

For decades, *Stan Lee* has been synonymous with Marvel Comics. This year, though, Lee is venturing into new realms—and that involves comics ventures with a number of other publishers, including Archie Comics and Boom Entertainment.

Archie Comics and A Squared Entertainment are collaborating with *Stan Lee* and POW! Entertainment to create a new comic book superhero line. The first title, ***Super Seven***, will not only be created by Lee, but will involve him as a character as well!

Super Seven focuses on seven aliens who find themselves stranded on planet Earth after their spaceship crashes, only to be befriended by none other than Lee himself. Taking them under his care, Lee becomes their leader and enables them to resume their lives as superheroes on earth.

Super Seven, which will be written by *Tom DeFalco* and illustrated by *Patrick "Spaz" Spaziante* (the artist of Archie's ***Sonic the Hedgehog***), is slated to debut this fall—but that's not the only *Stan Lee*-created project that fans can look forward to...

"*Stan Lee* has been delivering groundbreaking entertainment to consumers for decades," A2 Entertainment Co-Founder and CEO *Andy Heyward* said, "and we couldn't be more excited to venture into the digital space together and introduce him to a new generation of fans."

"*Stan Lee* is a global icon. He has single handedly changed modern entertainment. His legendary creations are timeless," Archie Comics Co-CEO *Jon Goldwater* added. "Archie Comics is incredibly proud to be working with *Stan Lee* in publishing ***Super Seven***.

""Stan's going to be the narrator," Goldwater told ***Comic Shop Newsarama's*** *Vaneta Rogers*. "He's a character in the comic itself. It's fun. The story is vibrant. The characters are incredible. It's a Stan Lee superhero comic in the old-school Marvel style."

"Nothing is more exciting to me, as a writer, than creating a new type of story or introducing a new theme," *Stan Lee* said. "Although I've briefly appeared in other comics, ***Super Seven*** is the first time that I'll actually be a continuing character in a far-out, original superhero series. Having been a fan of the Archie Comics line for many decades, it's a real kick to have this opportunity to help them launch my new, highly-stylized superhero saga which we'll soon bequeath to a grateful public."

Giffen & DeMatteis—Up to Funny Business Once Again

The Authority—a *funny* book? It may not be what most readers expect, but that's just what they're going to get next month when the legendary ***Justice League International*** writing team of *Keith Giffen & J.M. DeMatteis* reunites for an offbeat story arc that begins in ***Authority: The Lost Year #8.***

Authority: The Lost Year continues a story launched by *Grant Morrison* over three years ago, but was left unfinished after only two issues were released. Giffen was brought on board to finish the story late last year; he is now taking the team across various alternate realities, which is where ***The Lost Year #8*** enters the picture.

"The book's various realities concept kind of lent itself to a kinda, sorta bwah-ha-ha story like this," Giffen told ***Comic Shop Newsarama's*** *Vaneta Rogers*. "I didn't think WildStorm would go for it, which shows how much I know."

Once the storyline was okayed, Giffen knew that there was no writer better suited to collaborate with him on these issues than *J. M. DeMatteis*. Was his former ***JLI*** partner familiar with ***The Authority?*** "Somewhat... but I had to get more familiar very quickly," DeMatteis said. "Honestly, it wasn't the chance to work on ***The Authority*** that made me say yes; it was another opportunity to work with Keith. We've been working together, on and off, for more than twenty years... and I'm enjoying it now more than ever. (You know where to send the check, Keith.) All that said, once I became familiar with the story and the characters and got the sense of what Keith wanted – which was, essentially, good old-fashioned ***JLI*** absurdity – I had a blast."

"The idea of playing Apollo and Midnighter as Beetle and Booster was just too rich to pass up," Giffen said of the story arc. "The actual story grew out of that. I don't think people familiar with what happens when J.M. and I get together will be surprised. ***Authority*** fans, however..."

"What's interesting about this is that we get to do that thing we do... and yet the Authority characters remain pretty consistent," DeMatteis added. "Well, the *original* Authority characters do. Their otherworldly doubles are another matter entirely. The alternate versions of Midnighter and Apollo were really fun to write. And there's a team of villains that JLI fans might find oddly... familiar."

While Giffen's original plan was to complete Morrison's story in ***The Authority: The Lost Year,*** he is the first to admit that this story arc wasn't a part of Morrison's plan. " I think I owe Grant an apology," Giffen joked. "I kind of took the bit in my teeth and ran with the book. Grant's basic concept is still there, but I don't think he should totally share the blame. All things considered..."

Don't expect the zaniness to last for long, however. "I'm just jumping in for two goofy issues," DeMatteis said, "then Keith gets Dead Serious again."

Authority: The Lost Year #8 is slated for mid-April release.

A New Charlaine Harris Undertaking at Dynamite

Readers and viewers alike know *Charlaine Harris* as the best-selling author of the Sookie Stackhouse novels that are the basis for HBO's acclaimed ***True Blood*** series—but that's not the only character that Harris has created... nor is it the only one destined to appear in other media.

Harris's Harper Connelly series, which includes the novels ***Grave Sight, Grave Surprise, An Ice Cold Grave,*** and ***Grave Secret,*** is about to make the jump to comics courtesy of Dynamite Entertainment. The publisher will adapt the first novel, ***Grave Sight,*** later this year.

Harper Connelly is a woman who has what you might call a strange job: she finds dead people. She can sense the final location of a person who's passed, and share their very last moment. The way Harper sees it, she's providing a service to the dead while bringing some closure to the living-but she's used to most people treating her like a blood-sucking leech. Traveling with her step-brother Tolliver as manager and sometime-bodyguard, she's become an expert at getting in, getting paid, and getting out fast. Because for the living it's always urgent-even if the dead can wait forever.

"I'm thrilled to join such a great team," *Charlaine Harris* said. "I'm excited about seeing a different vision of my novels, and I've seen enough of the Dynamite Entertainment to know this will be an interesting and entertaining process."

I'M FRONT-PAGING YOUR PHOTOS, PETER!
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 3-12
THIS CHECK SHOULD COVER YOUR EXPENSES-- AND MORE.
I HOPE IT'S SATISFACTORY.
WOW!!!
CAN I TAKE THAT AS A "YES"?
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"Charlaine has thrilled millions of readers with her novels, and millions more with the adaptation of her Sookie Stackhouse series as the TV Show known as ***True Blood***," Dynamite publisher *Nick Barrucci* said. "We at Dynamite are honored to be the first comics publisher to be granted the right to adapt her novels in to the first ever comics adaptation. And Charlaine's kind words on our comics and confidence in our ability to execute will be rewarded with Dynamite's placing the best talent available on these adaptations!"

CSNsider

•Ring alert! Thought that the eight multicolored rings offered by DC last fall comprised a complete set of the Lantern power rings? Think again! DC is producing a White Lantern Promotional Ring—and it'll be offered in conjunction with ***Brightest Day #1,*** slated for mid-April release. Even better, DC is also adding the White Lantern Ring to their ***Blackest Night Power Ring Spectrum Set,*** slated for July release. This set, which now includes nine rings, is modified so that each ring lights up with a long-lasting LED bulb when slipped on a finger. (The light can be turned off manually to preserve the battery, and batteried can also be changed using a special key included with the set.)

•Bluewater Productions is working on a biography of *Charlaine Harris,* author of the Sookie Stackhouse and Harper Connelly novels, for their ***Female Force*** line. Even better, Harris is participating in the production of the biographical comic, granting extensive interviews to writer *Kim Sherman.*

•The Saints are about to come marching in at 12-Gauge Comics. This May, the company will unveil their two-issue ***Boondock Saints*** limited series ***In Nomine Patris.*** Written by ***Boondock Saints*** creator-writer-director *Troy Duffy* with *J.B. Love* and illustrated by *Guus Floor,* the series is described by 12-Gauge as "a deleted and extended sequence", the series expands on the story and characters in ***Boondock Saints II: All Saints Day*** and delves deeper into the secret origin of the "Original Saint", Il Duce.

•One of Marvel's mystery books for April release was ***Fallen,*** which was released with no description or cover image. Well, we now have a few more details, as well as a partly blacked out cover image. Here's what Marvel has to say about ***Fallen*** (which, by the way, *won't* be the final title of this book): "The ***Siege*** has ended and taken its toll on both sides of the battle field. The event seven years in the making has claimed many lives, and in this, its final chapter, a universe comes together to mourn (CLASSIFIED). The shocking death that ended the fight and gave birth to a new Heroic Age is remembered as a writer (CLASSIFIED) returns to lead the farewells." We *can* tell you that *Tom Raney* will supply the art...

•***Blackest Night #8,*** slated for release in two more weeks, will expand with the addition of ten extra story pages at no extra cost.

•***Icons: The DC Comics & WildStorm Art of Jim Lee,*** which *CSN* told you about back in 2008, is ever-closer to seeing print—and DC recently offered a look at Lee's pencilled art for the cover to the volume that any fan of fine comics art will consider a must-have.

•*Fred Hembeck* is contributing a "Li'l Petey" story to ***Peter Parker #1,*** in stores next week.

•We've already told you about May's ***Avengers #1*** and ***Secret Avengers #1;*** now we know that a third title, ***New Avengers #1,*** joins the lineup in June. Who's in it? Who's writing it? Who's drawing it? All will be revealed in due time...

Snap Back With Stan's Back!

In late February, a number of mysterious ads touting the two-word phrase "Stan's Back" began appearing in a variety of places. The ads didn't identify the advertiser or offer any details... until now.

It turns out that the company begin the "Stan's Back" ad was Boom Studios, who has confirmed that *Stan Lee* will present a series of three superhero titles at Boom; these books will not be written by Lee (one of the books will be written by Boom editor-in-chief *Mark Waid,* with other writers to be revealed in the next week or two.

Between this deal and the Archie Comics *Stan Lee* project, it appears that Stan Lee and POW! Entertainment have a very busy year in store!

Standing Order

A little bit confused about the upcoming ***Last Stand of New Krypton*** storyline? Not sure where it starts and which issues it continues into? Well, there's a good reason: the series was initially solicited under the story arc title of "Brainiac and the Legion of Super-Heroes." So for those of you who want to make sure you don't miss out on this story arc that leads into May's ***War of the Supermen,*** here are the various installments, in order:

•Prologue: ***Adventure Comics #8*** (JAN100253), in stores March 3.

•Part 1: ***Superman: Last Stand of New Krypton #1,*** in stores March 10.

•Part 2: ***Supergirl #51,*** in stores March 17.

•Part 3: ***Superman #698,*** in stores March 24.

•Part 4: ***Adventure Comics #9,*** in stores March 31.

•Part 5: ***Superman: Last Stand of New Krypton #2,*** in stores April 7.

•Part 6: ***Adventure Comics #10,*** in stores April 14.

•Part 7: ***Supergirl #52,*** in stores April 21.

•Part 8: ***Superman #699,*** in stores April 28.

•Part 9: ***Superman: Last Stand of New Krypton #3,*** in stores April 28.

•Epilogue: ***Adventure Comics #11,*** in stores May 12.

I HOPE YOU'LL BRING ME MORE PHOTOS OF THAT MASKED HERO!
COUNT ON IT, MR. SANTOS.
AND I KNOW HOW I'LL SPEND MOST OF THIS MONEY!
STAN/LARRY LEE/LIEBER 3-13

LATER--
I WANT THAT SPIDER-MAN COSTUME IN THE WINDOW.
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CSN TOP COMICS: APRIL

AREA 10 HC

Christos Gage (W); Chris Samnee (A)
(Vertigo/DC DEC090262 $19.99)

What's the Scoop?

In New York City, a killer known as 'Henry The Eighth' leaves a trail of decapitated corpses—keeping the severed heads to use for unknown purposes. NYPD Detective Adam Kamen leads the investigation, until a seemingly unrelated freak incident leaves him with a brain injury in the section known as 'Brodmann Area 10.' When he recovers, Adam's perceptions of time are altered. He becomes slowly convinced that his bizarre condition could be tied directly to the 'Henry' case - and that the key may lie in the ancient, mystical practice of trepanation.

Why Should You Care?

Christos Gage knows that it takes more than a noir tone to make a good crime tale—and that's why he's added compelling twists that make ***Area 10*** Vertigo's best crime novel thus far!

AVENGERS: ORIGIN #1 (OF 5)

Joe Casey (W); Phil Noto (A)
(Marvel FEB100497 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

With the real Avengers on their way back next month, what better time to explore the origins of Marvel's first all-star superteam? And it's no surprise to *Joe Casey* fans that he has some intriguing revelations regarding that fateful superhero meeting.

Why Should You Care?

Joe Casey, who has twice before explored the early days of the Avengers in ***Earth's Mightiest Heroes 1 & 2,*** takes readers back to that first adventure for a five-part tale that should appeal to veteran readers while serving as a perfect complement to the new ***Avengers*** series. And *Phil Noto's* art brings a vivid, almost cinematic reality to the adventure, making it a visual treat as well as a great read.

BRIGHTEST DAY #0

Geoff Johns & Peter Tomasi (W); Fernando Pasarin (A)
(DC FEB100116 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

Blackest Night has come to an end... and now we see what comes next for DC's mightiest heroes—and for the next era of the DCU. The changes begin here!

Why Should You Care?

There are surprises galore in store for readers of this biweekly miniseries—surprises that involve some of DC's most beloved characters. And there's a visual treat leading off every issue as superstar artist *David Finch* makes his DC debut as cover illustrator for this year-long series.

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER #34

Brad Meltzer (W); Georges Jeanty & Andy Owens (A)
(Dark Horse FEB100042 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

The identity of Twilight has been revealed—and it's the last person that Buffy would have ever suspected! But what's behind his actions—and how will react to the revelation of his identity?

Why Should You Care?

This issue takes *Season 8* in a direction that *no one* anticipated—and that means that there will be a lot of readers coming back to the series once the news of Twilight's identity becomes widely known.

DOC SAVAGE #1

Paul Malmont & Jason Starr (W); Howard Porter, Art Thibert, & Scott Hampton (W)
(DC FEB100154 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

In a world without super-powered beings, the only "supermen" are those who have developed themselves physically and intellectually to the absolute limits of human ability... and there's no one who meets that measure more than Doc Savage! And in the backup story, you'll meet Richard Benson, the malleable-faced hero known as the Avenger.

Why Should You Care?

DC enlists the aid of novelist *Paul Malmont,* author of the *Lester Dent-Walter Gibson* adventure ***The Chinatown Death-Cloud Peril,*** to ensure that this version of Doc lives up to the character's seventy-five-plus year reputation.

DV8: GODS AND MONSTERS #1 (OF 8)

Brian Wood (W); Rebekah Isaaks (A)
(WildStorm/DC FEB100224 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

The misfit teens better known as DV8 have experienced a lot of strange things... but how did they end up as gods in a pre-historic world?

Why Should You Care?

Vertigo star writer *Brian Wood* ventures into WildStorm superhero territory with this fast-paced, offbeat eight-parter.

FLASH #1

Geoff Johns (W); Francis Manapul (A)
(DC FEB100123 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

Barry Allen is back in action in Central City—and he'll need to get up to speed very quickly if he wants to solve the case of a murdered Rogue!

Why Should You Care?

Geoff Johns brought the Flash back to the DCU in ***Flash: Rebirth;*** he made him pivotal player in ***Blackest Night;*** and now, at long last, he restores Barry Allen to his rightful place as a star of the DCU.

GREEN HORNET YEAR ONE #1

Matt Wagner (W); Aaron Campbell (A)
(Dynamite FEB100809 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

What led respected journalist Britt Reid to don a mask and become a crimefighter? Find out in this story that sheds light on the earliest exploits of the Golden Age hero.

Why Should You Care?

Matt Wagner, who has demonstrated his skill with Golden Age heroes in the pages of ***Sandman Mystery Theatre,*** gets a chance to chronicle the hitherto-unrevealed origin of one of comics' best-known heroes.

GREEN LANTERN #53 (BRIGHTEST DAY)

Geoff Johns (W); Doug Mahnke & Christian Alamy (A)
(DC FEB100118 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

Hal Jordan, Sinestro, Carol Ferris, Saint Walker, Atrocitus, Indigo-1 and Larfleeze—now *there's* a surprising team! But they have to put the past behind him when confronted by one of strangest beings from Green Lantern's past.

YOU SPENT THE MONEY YOU GOT FOR YOUR PHOTOS--ON A SPIDER-MAN COSTUME?!
SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME.
YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T PLAN TO BE SPIDEY HERE IN MIAMI.
RIGHT, BUT FOR SOME REASON I CAN'T EXPLAIN--
MY SPIDER-SENSE MADE ME DO IT!
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 3-15
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stanzlee1@ aol.com

Why Should You Care?

In the aftermath of ***Blackest Night***, *Geoff Johns* is making ***Green Lantern*** a centerpiece of the DCU, and that's plenty of reason to check this one out. Need another reason? Well, there *is* a ring incentive to go along with this ***Brightest Day*** tie-in...

IRREDEEMABLE SPECIAL #1

Mark Waid & Paul Azaceta (W); Jerry Ordway & Howard Chaykin (A)

(Boom FEB100758 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

This standalone issue offers never-before-seen details about the Plutonian's heroic beginnings, as well as insights into his former teammates, the Paradigm.

Why Should You Care?

Mark Waid expands the backstory of his fascinating hero-turned villain—and he's enlisted the aid of a pair of top-tier artists, *Jerry Ordway* and *Howard Chaykin*, both of whom are paying their first visit to the ***Irredeemable*** universe.

KILL SHAKESPEARE #1

Anthony Del Col & Conor McCreery (W); Andy Belanger (A)

(IDW FEB100959 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

Hamlet, Richard III, Juliet, Iago, Falstaff and other famous Shakespearean characters set off on a quest to find and kill the wizard responsible for their woes... a fellow named Shakespeare...

Why Should You Care?

Part ***League of Extraordinary Gentlemen***, part ***Fables***, yet different from either work, ***Kill Shakespeare*** is one of the most fascinating and provocative looks into the relationship between creator and creation since the Shakespeare issues of *Neil Gaiman's* ***Sandman***.

SHIELD #1

Jonathan Hickman (W); Dustin Weaver (A)

(Marvel FEB100539 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

Leonardo Da Vinci was an agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. So was Sir Isaac Newton. So were Imhotep and Zhang Heng and Galileo and many other geniuses throughout time. They were the first heroes to defeat Galactus and the Brood and turn Celestials back. They saved the world long before Captain America or Iron Man were ever born... but what does this mean to our heroes of today?

Why Should You Care?

Jonathan Hickman creates a backstory that propels SHIELD into the same secret-society conspiracy realm as the Illuminati and the Freemasons in this complex, conspiratorial series.

SIEGE #4 (OF 4)

Brian Bendis (W); Olivier Coipel (A)

(Marvel FEB100421 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

The Siege comes to an end in this landmark issue. Lives are changed. Heroes fall. And at last, Norman Osborn's true nature is revealed as a long chapter in Marvel history comes to a dramatic conclusion.

Why Should You Care?

The dark era of heroic conflict that began with ***Civil War*** comes to an end here, paving the way for Marvel's Heroic Age next month... and this is the transitional issue that explains how we get from point A to point B!

SPIRIT #1

Mark Schultz (W); Moritat (A)

(DC FEB100156 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

When the international crime syndicate The Golden Tree offers to help Central City's Octopus consolidate control over the city's underworld, it's up to the Spirit to shut down this murderous partnership... but the Golden Tree has charged their best assassin with the job of shutting down the Spirit first!

Why Should You Care?

Acclaimed writer *Mark Schultz*, who continues to make ***Prince Valiant*** one of the finest adventure comic strips being produced today, takes the Spirit back to its Eisneresque basics in this new series set in the same world as ***First Wave*** and ***Doc Savage***.

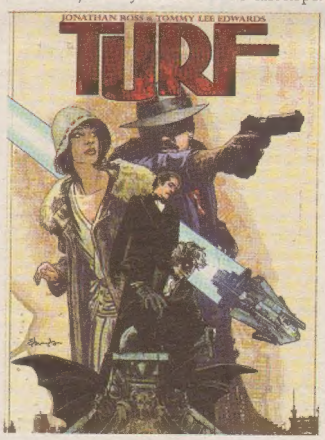
TURF #1

Jonathan Ross (W); Tommy Lee Edwards (A)

(Image FEB100322 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

It's New York 1929—a Prohibition-era city rife with corrupt cops, speakeasies, mobsters, and murder. But things are about to take a much darker turn with the arrival of the mysterious Dragonmir family... a family with a literal taste for blood! The other side has an ace in the hole, though, in the form of an alien who just may be the humans' last hope!



NOW THAT YOU'VE GOT A SPIDEY SUIT, IS YOUR ROLE AS THE "GUARDIAN ANGEL" FINISHED?
I COULD SELL MORE SHOTS OF HIM, BUT I FELT RIDICULOUS IN THAT GET-UP!
RRINNNG
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 3-16
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Why Should You Care?

Jonathan Ross, one of the most famous broadcasters in the UK, makes his comics debut with this edgy horror-noir series—and if just a fraction of his very loyal BBC audience follows him to this comic, it's going to be one of the year's best sellers!

ULTIMATE COMICS AVENGERS 2 #1

Mark Millar (W); Leinil Francis Yu (A)

(Marvel FEB100473 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

Some jobs are just too dirty for the Ultimates. For these, Nick Fury must gather the Avengers, a black ops team willing to do the missions that others won't. What role will an notorious Punisher play in Fury's plans?

Why Should You Care?

The Avengers are back... but this is a team that makes the Ultimates seem positively upstanding in comparison!

Collected Cool:

April's Best Reprint Volumes

ABSOLUTE GREEN LANTERN: REBIRTH HC

(DC SEP090163 $75.00)

This oversized slipcased edition includes ***Green Lantern: Rebirth #1-6***, ***Green Lantern #1***, the preview story from ***Wizard Magazine***, a tale from ***Green Lantern Secret Files 2005***, along with sketches and bonus material—and that means it's a must-have for *GL* fans!

BLOOM COUNTY COMPLETE LIBRARY HC VOL 2

(IDW FEB101005 $39.99)

The second ***Bloom County*** collection begins the day after Volume One ends. Collecting every daily and Sunday strip from September 27, 1982 through July 1, 1984—but it's the insightful, clever commentary by Berke Breathed that's the most entertaining aspect of this long-overdue collection of one of the most influential comic strips in the past half-century.

DANGER GIRL DELUXE ED HC

(IDW FEB101008 $50.00)

This oversized hardcover collects the long out-of-print *J. Scott Campbell* fan-fave sexy adventure series, adding over 20 pages of Danger Girl drawings and sketches by Campbell, many published here for the first time.

INVINCIBLE IRON MAN OMNIBUS HC VOL 2

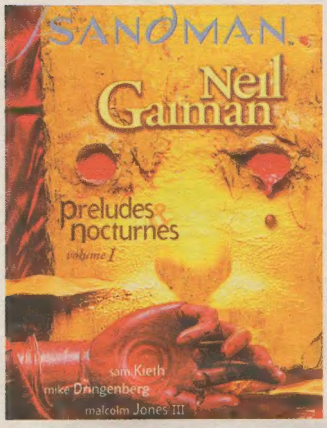
(Marvel NOV090533 $99.99)

The second doorstop-sized compendium of Iron Man tales features material orignally published in ***Tales of Suspense #s 84-99, Iron Man & Sub-Mariner #1,*** and ***Iron Man #s 1-25.***

PRINCE VALIANT HC VOL 2: 1937-1938

(Fantagraphics FEB100920 $29.99)

Fantagraphics continues their comprehensive reprinting of *Hal Foster's* classic adventure strip—and it's never looked better than this, since the publisher is shooting from original proof sheets!



SANDMAN TP VOL 1: PRELUDES AND NOCTURNES NEW EDITION

(Vertigo/DC JAN100363 $19.99)

Sure, this collection of ***Sandman #s 1-8*** has been around for years—but this is the first time the trade paperback has utilized the upgraded production values and coloring first prepared for the big-ticket ***Absolute Sandman***!

SIMPSONS/FUTURAMA: CROSSOVER CRISIS SLIPCASE HC

(Bongo JAN100798 $24.95)

Bongo collects its two crossover miniseries in one deluxe slipcased edition, adding a facsimile reprint of ***Simpsons #1*** to the mix.

Check 'Em Out:
Books You *Should* Be Reading

AMERICAN VAMPIRE #2

(Vertigo/DC FEB100246 $3.99)

Scott Snyder, Stephen King, & Rafael Albuquerque continue their look at the next generation of vampires with tales of Skinner Sweet and Pearl Jones—and this is original *Stephen King* material produced expressly for this comic, not a third-party adaptation or continuation of King tales!

KEVIN SMITH'S KATO #1

(Dynamite FEB100815 $3.99)

You met her for the first time in the pages of last month's ***Kevin Smith's Green Hornet #1***—now learn more about the female Kato and her connection to the original!

LAST UNICORN #1

(IDW FEB100936 $3.99)

Peter S. Beagle's acclaimed fantasy best-seller comes to comics in this miniseries that follows a unicorn's quest through an enchanted wood as she embarks on a quest to find others of her kind.

MAGDALENA #1

(Top Cow/Image FEB100406 $3.99)

Ron Marz & Nelson Blake II kick off the new adventures of The Magdalena, the official protector and warrior of the Catholic Church for over two thousand years, who sworn to defend the Faith with the Spear of Destiny against all manner of supernatural threats.

OTHER LIVES HC

(Vertigo/DC DEC090263 $24.99)

Peter Bagge introduces readers to three certified geeks: a self-loathing journalist who has a seemingly normal girlfriend, a conspiracy theorist who still lives with his mother, and an unemployed gamer who lives in his car. Before you finish this quirky graphic novel, you'll *swear* that you know at least one of this trio...

PRINCE OF PERSIA: BEFORE THE SANDSTORM

(Disney JAN100911 $9.99)

Prince of Persia creator *Jordan Mechner* enlists the aid of such creators as *Todd McFarlane, Niko Henrichon, David Lopez, and Bernard Chang* for this original graphic novel.

SHREK: FOREVER AFTER—THE PREQUEL

(Ape FEB100656 $6.95)

Shrek and the gang are back in this exciting prequel to this summer's animated feature ***Shrek Forever After.***

STAR TREK: MCCOY #1

(IDW FEB100972 $3.99)

Acclaimed writer/artist *John Byrne* sees to it that one of fiction's most famous doctors, Leonard McCoy, gets his moment in the spotlight.

FYI: Must-Have Additions to Your Reference Library

ART OF JAIME HERNANDEZ: SECRETS OF LIFE & DEATH HC

(Abrams JAN101200 $40.00)

Jaime Hernandez opens his archives for the first time, revealing never-before-seen sketches, childhood drawings, and unpublished work, alongside his most famous ***Love and Rockets*** material, much of it photographed in color from the original art.

CHARLES M SCHULZ: MY LIFE WITH CHARLIE BROWN HC

(University Press of Mississippi JAN101203 $25.00)

We know him best for his comic strip work, but this anthology compiles *Charles Schulz's* major prose writings in a single volume, offering a fascinating look into the heart and mind of one of comics most beloved creators.

COMICS ILLUSTRATED: HISTORY OF COMIC STRIP ART SC

(Dark Horse DEC090044 $24.99)

Jerry Robinson has fully reworked and updated his classic reference work that chronicles the origins and evolution of comic strips.

ESSENTIAL WONDER WOMAN ENCYCLOPEDIA SC

(Del Rey FEB101194 $30.00)

From A to Z, this comprehensive, fully illustrated sourcebook contains everything you ever wanted to know about Wonder Woman.

WONDER WOMAN: AMERICAN ICON HC

(Universe JAN101220 $35.00)

April promises to be a great month for Wonder Woman fans as *Robert Greenberger* offers a comprehensive look at the first and most important female superheroine in comics.

Hot Commodities:
April's Hottest Merchandising & Collectibles

BLACKEST NIGHT SERIES 4 BLACK HAND ACTION FIGURE

(DC Direct SEP090252 $24.00)

BLACKEST NIGHT SERIES 4 BLACK LANTERN FIRESTORM ACTION FIGURE

(DC Direct SEP090253 $24.00)

BLACKEST NIGHT SERIES 4 KYLE RAYNER ACTION FIGURE

(DC Direct SEP090254 $24.00)

BLACKEST NIGHT SERIES 4 WONDER WOMAN ACTION FIGURE

(DC Direct SEP090255 $24.00)

Blackest Night may be over, but the collectible tie-ins keep on a'coming! DC Direct offers another quartet of ***Blackest Night*** action figures—and you

know that these are going to sell out just as quickly as the first three series, so grab 'em while you can!

DC CHRONICLES: BATMAN STATUE

(DC Direct SEP090245 $99.99)

First in a new series of statues offering modern interpretations of the original depictions of some of DC Comics' most beloved characters. The new DC Chronicles line will have a consistent base with a retro-style logo that captures the era from which the character originated.

DC COVER ART PRINT: SUPERMAN

(DC Direct SEP090256 $125.00)

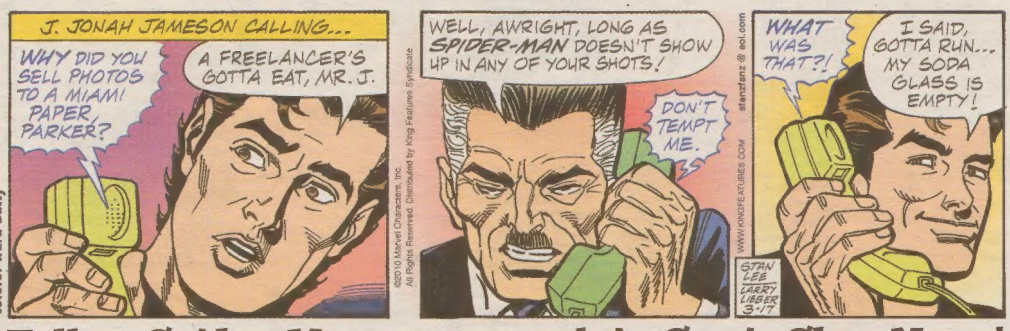
A high-quality facsimile of *Alex Ross'* original pencil art appears beside a reproduction of the final, printed cover, and a Certificate of Authenticity signed by the artist himself is also included.

GREEN LANTERN LEGACIES STATUE PART 1: HAL JORDAN

(DC Direct SEP090243 $195.00)

DC Direct's latest multi-character statue series launches with a sculpture depicting Green Lantern Hal Jordan and both classic and modern versions of the Guardians of the Universe; this statue also includes one segment of an Alan Scott Green Lantern figure (the other two segments will be included in the other two statue sets in the GL Legacies series).

twitter.com/csnsider


J. JONAH JAMESON CALLING...
WHY DID YOU SELL PHOTOS TO A MIAMI PAPER, PARKER?
A FREELANCER'S GOTTA EAT, MR. J.
Colors: Ward Batty
WELL, AWRIGHT, LONG AS SPIDER-MAN DOESN'T SHOW UP IN ANY OF YOUR SHOTS!
DON'T TEMPT ME.
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WHAT WAS THAT?!
I SAID, GOTTA RUN... MY SODA GLASS IS EMPTY!
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 3-17

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